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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 006581

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL ENVOY NATSIOS'S OCTOBER 21 MEETINGS WITH THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL

Classified by DCM Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

**¶11. (C)** Summary and comment: In separate October 21 meetings, Presidential Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios discussed next steps on Sudan with Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa and Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit. Moussa agreed the humanitarian situation in Darfur was bad but it fell short of genocide; Aboul Gheit worried about the prospect of Darfur refugees coming to Egypt. All agreed that a peace-keeping force should not present a "white face." Moussa was encouraging about North African Arab participation, Aboul Gheit, less so. Both pressed for a follow-on resolution to UNSCR 1706 assuring that Sudanese officials would not be prosecuted and that the African Union would continue to play a lead role. Aboul Gheit was enthusiastic about providing the GOS sovereignty assurances, namely by linking Chapter 8 implementation to UNSCR 1706. Moussa thought resistance to restarting the Cease-Fire Commission would come from the rebels, whereas Aboul Gheit foresaw GOS objections. Moussa has asked Bashir to be pro-active, including a possible Security Council speech. Both interlocutors were willing to push Bashir to accept a more robust peace-keeping operation; neither, however, was willing to challenge Bashir's refusal to place the troops formally under the UN. End Summary and comment.

**¶12. (U)** The US delegation in both meetings consisted of Presidential Special Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios, Ambassador to Egypt Francis Ricciardone, Chief of Staff AF/SE Andrew Steinfeld, Charge d'Affaires to Sudan Cameron Hume, and Embassy poloffs. Secretary General Moussa was accompanied by Assistant Secretary General Ahmed Ben Helli, Africa Office Director Samir Hosni, Chief of Staff Hisham Youssef, Cabinet Staffer Zeid Al Sabban, and Spokesperson Alaa Rushdy. Aboul Gheit was accompanied by Sudan Office Director Sabre Mansour and Cabinet Staffers Ahmed Abu Zeid and Ashraf Sweilam.

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Humanitarian Situation  
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**¶13. (C)** During their one-hour introductory meeting, Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa agreed with Natsios that the humanitarian situation in Darfur was very bad and is having a destabilizing effect on neighboring countries. However, he was quick to say that genocide is not occurring and that the media is inflaming the situation. In a separate meeting, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit cited fears that Darfur refugees might descend upon Cairo, as happened last year. He said that because of this, Egypt has on-going humanitarian assistance efforts in Darfur, including food shipments to the World Food Program and an Egyptian field hospital. Aboul Gheit also asked to see US photographs, mentioned by Natsios, that document destroyed

villages in Darfur.

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Creating Peace-Keepers Acceptable To Bashir  
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¶4. (C) Natsios thanked Moussa for his role in moving Bashir to respond positively to the Annan/Konare letter requesting UN support for a strengthened AU Mission In Sudan (AMIS). Both Moussa and Aboul Gheit said they had seen some encouraging movement from Bashir on the peace-keepers issue, and emphasized the importance of, in Aboul Gheit's words, not giving the peace-keepers a "white face." Aboul Gheit suggested the force might wear both UN and AU emblems and Moussa offered it might be led by an African or other "3rd world" commander. Natsios emphasized the force must be robust and efficient, and, for this to happen, it must fall under UN mechanisms. He noted Sudan's refusal to release communications equipment to AU troops as proof of the Sudanese desire to keep the force ineffective. Natsios also sought support for the force to be funded under the UN peace-keeping budget.

¶5. (C) Moussa warned that overt US pressure on Bashir to comply "or else" is not helping, and that Sudan is afraid of a force that it sees as similar to the Multi-National Force in Iraq. Natsios told both Moussa and Aboul Gheit the US realizes that Bashir cannot accept 1706 directly.

¶6. (C) Natsios pressed both leaders to urge North African countries to commit publicly to sending troops. Moussa was receptive, but Aboul Gheit said that fighting must stop first so that Arabs are not keeping the peace between Arab and non-Arab factions. Aboul Gheit also complained that earlier

CAIRO 00006581 002 OF 003

Egyptian offers of military assistance to the UN and AU had been rebuffed. (Comment: The offers were rebuffed because Sudan is sensitive to an Egyptian presence in its affairs. End Comment.) He said Egypt had offered to send 50 experienced officers to the UN for the recently accepted beefed up UN support presence, but that the UN accepted only one officer. In addition, the AU accepted only 85 of the 200 army soldiers and policemen Egypt had offered. The AU, Aboul Gheit said, had not even responded to an offer to double these numbers.

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GOS Wants Assurances Of 1706's Limited Mandate  
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¶7. (C) Moussa and Aboul Gheit both pressed for a follow-on resolution to UNSCR 1706 to assure the GOS that the 1706 mandate would not expand to include prosecution of Sudanese officials and non-African control of the peace-keeping force. Moussa also criticized 1706 for coming too soon after the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), which he thought would have been effective had it been given more time to work. Natsios re-affirmed to both leaders US support for 1706, but acknowledged the US would be willing to look at some modifications - the bottom line being the force's effectiveness.

¶8. (C) As one possible compromise, Aboul Gheit enthusiastically supported linking implementation of Chapter 8 to the provisions of 1706 and having both the UN and AU accept an identical mandate - an idea raised in an ad hoc brainstorming session. Aboul Gheit felt this would assure the GOS that accepting 1706 would not open it up to possible later prosecution, while at the same time making a second UN resolution unnecessary.

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Talking Peace And The Cease Fire Commission  
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¶ 9. (C) All parties agreed on the importance of getting non-signatories to agree to the DPA, even if that meant some annexes to the agreement. European proposals for a large conference outside of Darfur would be ineffective. Natsios suggested to both Moussa and Aboul Gheit that restarting the currently defunct Cease Fire Commission (CFC) would be an important step in realizing a ceasefire. Aboul Gheit believes Sudan would still be unwilling to accept the participation of non-signatories to the DPA in the CFC. Moussa, in contrast, thought Bashir would not object, but that the rebel groups themselves would refuse.

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Moussa Pressed Bashir To Take Action  
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¶ 10. (C) Moussa said he had called upon the GOS to develop its own initiatives for peace rather than waiting for international efforts. He asked Bashir to address the UN Security Council on the Darfur issue (perhaps reiterating Kofi Annan's request), and said Bashir seemed potentially interested in doing so after November 23. Aboul Gheit also thought Bashir might be willing to go before the Council after the 23rd. Moussa promised to advise Bashir, if he does speak to the Council, that statements calling peace-keeping troops a "prelude to invasion" would not be helpful. Moussa said Bashir was receptive to Moussa's idea of an advisory board to deal with Darfur, consisting of the UN, AU, AL, EU, Islamic Conference, and others.

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Aboul Gheit Asks For PR  
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¶ 11. (C) Aboul Gheit asked Natsios to inform Congress on Egypt's efforts to help in Sudan, including its humanitarian efforts and its offers to send officers. He also requested that Natsios highlight Egypt's efforts in his interviews with Egyptian media that were to follow the meeting.

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Moussa, Aboul Gheit Diverge On Urgency  
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¶ 12. (C) Natsios pressed both Moussa and Aboul Gheit for prompt international action on Darfur, noting that the coming change of the UN Secretary General and senior staff will

CAIRO 00006581 003 OF 003

leave a deep gap in Sudan expertise. Upcoming US congressional elections may also affect US policy. Should there be wide-scale killings in Darfur as a result of GOS policy, the US administration may come under enormous pressure to act, warned Natsios.

¶ 13. (C) Moussa agreed with Natsios's portrayal of the time pressure and on the need to quickly present a united front to the Sudanese. Aboul Gheit, however, said that thinking of "imaginative solutions" was more important than working quickly. He reiterated the importance of assuring the GOS of the limits of the mandate of 1706.

¶ 14. (U) This message was cleared by the Natsios delegation.  
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